



The President's Daily Brief

17 June 1970
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

17 June 1970

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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Yasir Arafat is facing a challenge to his leadership of the fedayeen. (Page 2)

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Egypt.

(Page 3)

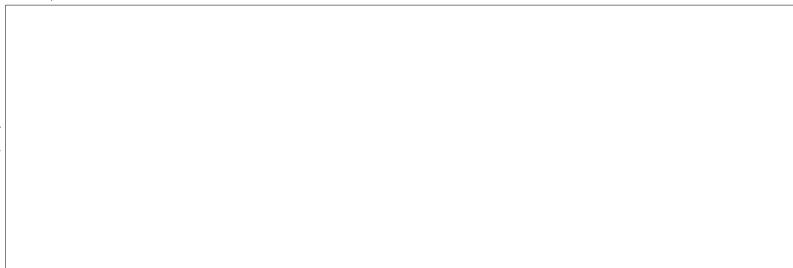
In Laos, the rain has practically halted military operations, although government and Communist troops are still keeping up what pressure they can.
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The Communists continue to gain ground west of the Mekong River in Cambodia. (Page 5)

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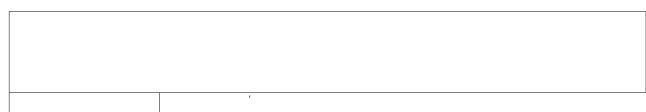
JORDAN



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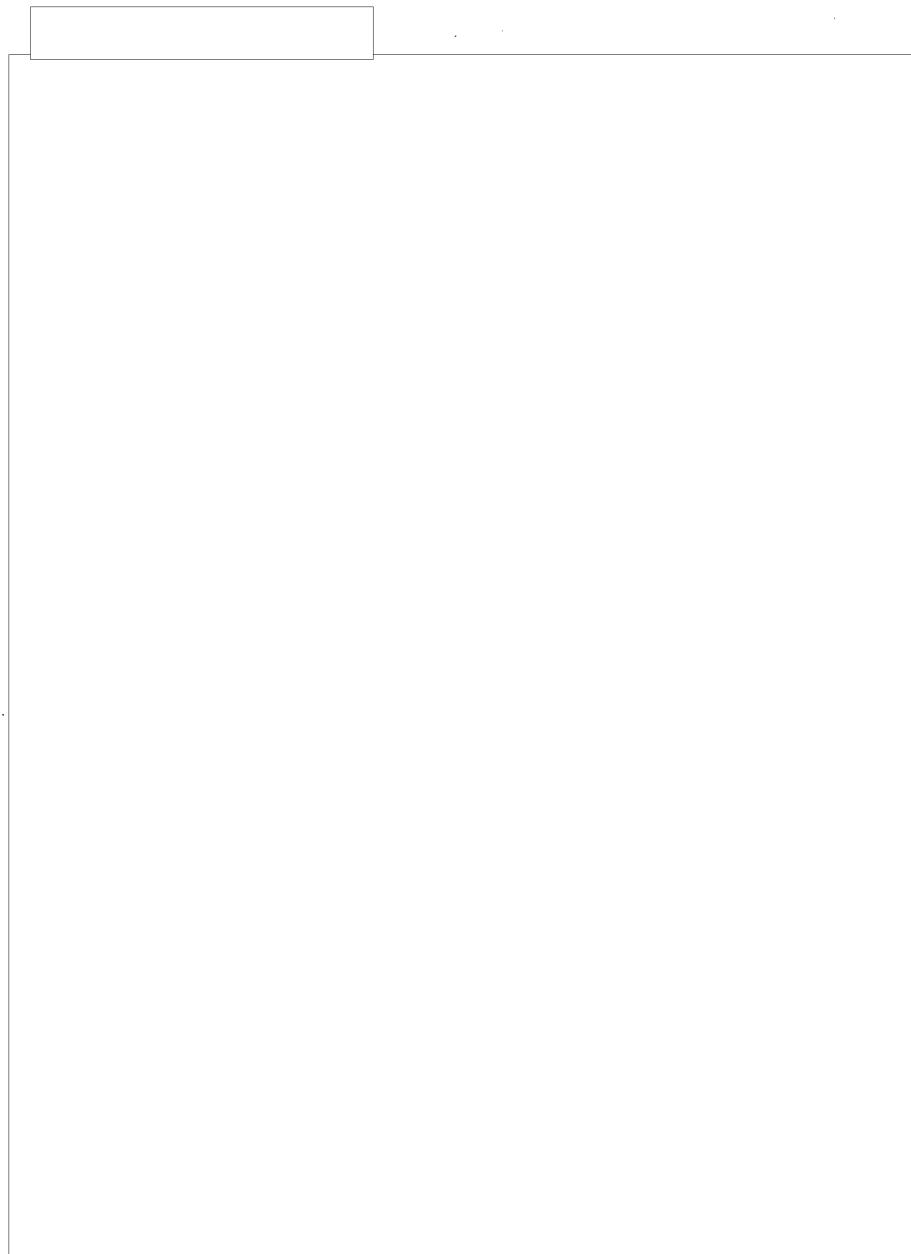
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FEDAYEEN

George Habbash and his radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine appear set to challenge Yasir Arafat and Fatah for leadership of the entire fedayeen movement. Habbash played a key role in the recent difficulties in Jordan. During the crisis, Arafat cooperated with Husayn who sought to arrange a cease-fire that would re-establish the status quo ante bellum. Habbash, however, held out until his group's demand for the removal of certain army leaders was met.

The incident has served to sharpen differences between the two groups. The future of fedayeen relations with other Arab governments and, by extension, the relative position of fedayeen leaders, will depend on the nature of the arrangement yet to be worked out between Husayn and the guerrillas.

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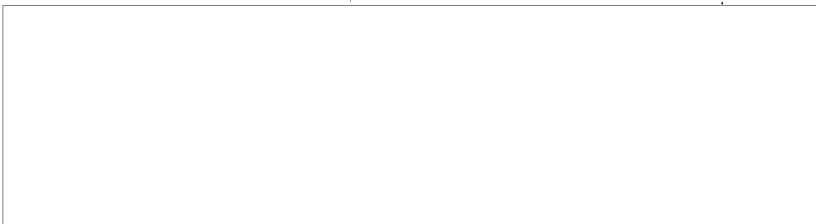


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USSR - MIDDLE EAST



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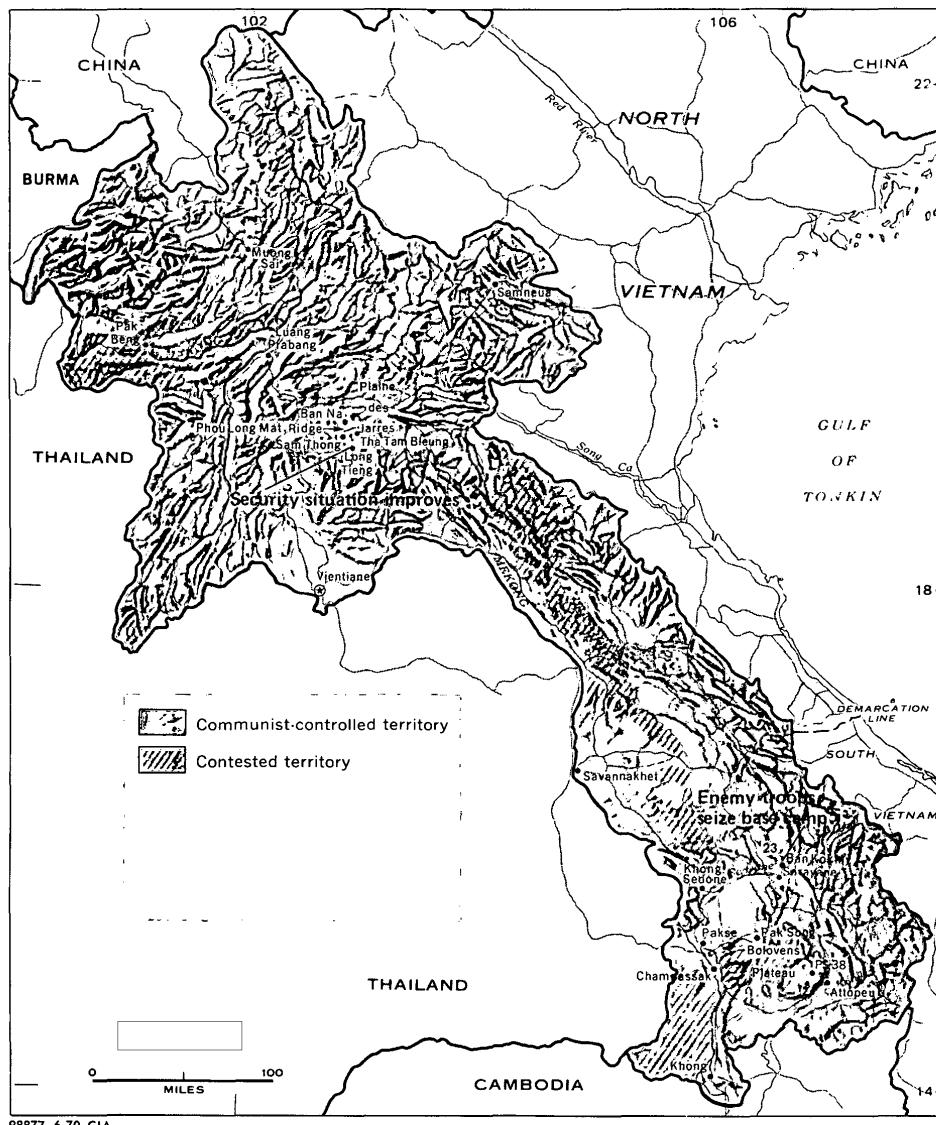
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Laos: Current Situation



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LAOS

Two North Vietnamese companies yesterday drove a joint Laotian Army and irregular force out of Ban Kok My, a small outpost that was to be the jumping-off point for the recapture of Saravane. In taking the base the Communists also captured several heavy weapons [redacted]

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The government still has a number of units in the Saravane area, including a 150-man force which is moving north of the town to interdict Route 23. The seizure of Ban Kok My, however, will set back the Laotian military effort in this area for several days.

In the north, adverse weather has brought military activity to a virtual standstill. With the advent of the rainy season the civilian population of the Long Tieng area apparently has convinced itself that the Communist threat has receded. As of mid-June, more than half of the inhabitants of the Long Tieng Valley had returned to their homes and resumed normal commercial activity.

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Cambodia: Current Situation



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CAMBODIA

Rumors are building that some sort of enemy attack will be made against Phnom Penh on 18 June, three months from the date of Sihanouk's ouster. Refugees from Kompong Speu claim that Communist forces there said they would strike Phnom Penh on that date. There is no hard evidence to support this.

Senior Cambodian Army officers are increasingly concerned over the military situation around Phnom Penh, but they lack firm intelligence on the strength and identification of the Communist units. Hasty steps are being taken in and around the city to improve its defenses. Government officials view the airfield, the radio station, and the electric power plant--all of which are outside the city proper--as likely Communist targets.

This sudden attack of war nerves probably has been brought on by recent enemy attacks against Siem Reap, Kompong Speu, and Kompong Chhnang, and by the government's dawning recognition of its now almost complete isolation from the countryside. Some Communist forces are close enough to Phnom Penh to stage sudden harassing attacks. The increasing boldness of the enemy west of the Mekong suggests that the Communists may make some move against the capital, but they do not appear prepared for a major infantry assault.

* * *

South Vietnamese troops reoccupied Kompong Speu city yesterday in the face of another Communist disappearing act. Enemy forces reportedly retreated to the south and west, leaving only pockets of resistance in the city. The South Vietnamese probably sullied their support considerably in Cambodian eyes when they engaged in extensive looting in Kompong Speu. Despite the city's recapture, Route 4 apparently is still closed.

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In the adjacent province of Kompong Chhnang, government defenders of the capital claim they drove three enemy columns out of the city yesterday. Western journalists returning from Kompong Chhnang city indicate that its defenders may have exaggerated the severity of the Communist attack there. Additional Communist attacks probably can be expected in this province, however; on 15 June, 400 Cambodian Communist insurgents reportedly were moving toward the government's main military supply depot at Lovek.

Government forces defending Kompong Thom city, aided by air support, withstood heavy Communist artillery and infantry attacks yesterday [redacted]

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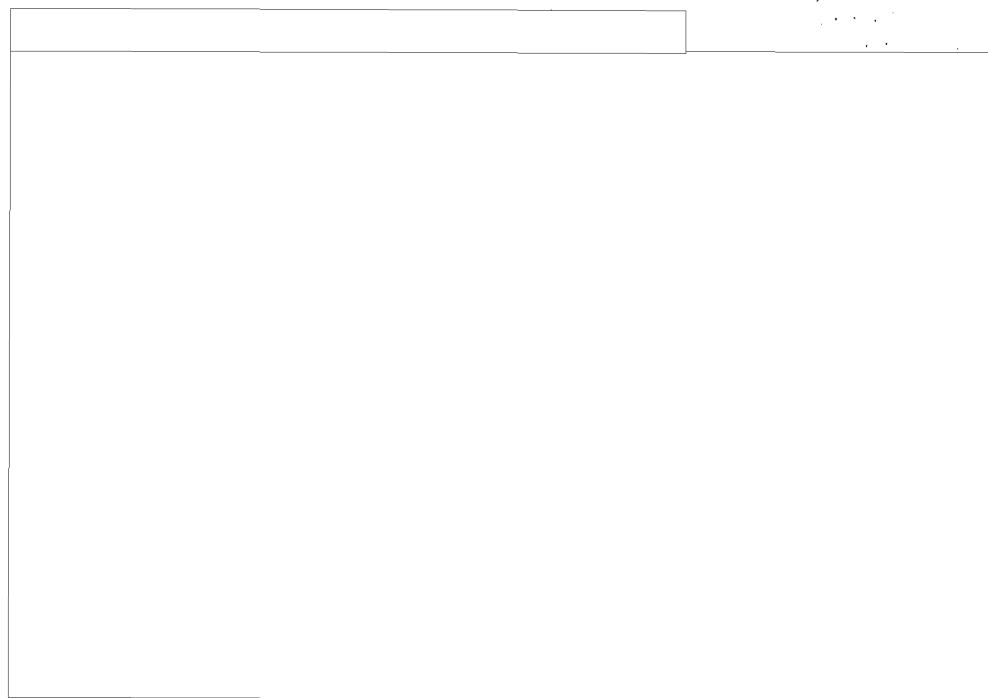
Kompong Cham town is also still in trouble. Fighting was reported yesterday around the university, and the Communists apparently attempted to seize bridges in the town. The government, anticipating additional attacks against Kompong Cham, claims the Communists have received important reinforcements from Kratie and Chhlong towns in Kratie Province. Substantial elements of the Viet Cong 9th Division are still near Kompong Cham.

* * *

Subordinate elements of the Communists' B-3 Front--the enemy's over-all command authority in South Vietnam's central highlands--have been moving deeper into Ratanakiri and Stung Treng provinces in northeastern Cambodia, as well as shifting positions along the border.

While some of these relocations are due to allied operations into long-time enemy sanctuaries, some of the combat units may have been used for attacks against Cambodian targets in Ratanakiri Province. Some of these units are probably now setting up a new and less vulnerable system of base areas and supply routes deeper in Cambodia.

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NOTES

USSR: The latest satellite photography mission provided at least partial coverage of 14 of the 25 ICBM complexes. No new launch groups were identified, but six new SS-11 silos and one new SS-13 silo were detected in existing groups.

USSR-China: The latest satellite photography shows that the Soviets are continuing to augment their forces opposite Sinkiang. [redacted]

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[redacted]
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South Vietnam: The police have learned of student plans for new and more violent agitation in Saigon within the next few days. Having extracted some concessions from the government in response to earlier demands, militant leaders are now shifting their sights to the peace issue and the American presence. The US Embassy is mentioned in the police reports as one possible target of new demonstrations.

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